

**Maximizing Potentials of (ICT) Information and Communication
Technology in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in
Nigeria.**

By

Kpeno Amon Ephraim, Ph.D

And

Goodness Philip Woha, Ph.D

ABSTRACT

Information and Communication Technology has come to stay, with huge positive impact in almost every sector of human endeavour. ICT has unified the world, through divers tools and programmes, making it possible for wide-range of e-learning activities, distance learning, interactive radio instruction, skill developments and technological enhancement skills. Achieving mass literacy is one of the guaranties for actualizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2030). This paper examined the potentials of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and how they could be maximized in achieving mass literacy education, adult and non-formal education in Nigeria, the benefits of adopting ICT illiteracy, and inherent challenges which impede the use of ICT in Mass literacy, Adult and Non- Formal education in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Information Communication, Technology, Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education, Potentials,

Introduction

Quality education in general has been identified as a critical factor to aid the overall development of the nation. Education at all levels is needed in shaping the lives of citizens towards national growth. Nigeria, as a developing nation, must invest in the area of human capital development as this is pivotal for achieving socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economic development. According to NMEC (2017), the

education of adults is requisite in order to achieve the national goals of unity, economic progress, security and social justice for all. In addition, it serves as a tool for the liberation of target audience from backwardness, poverty, over dependence, ignorance etc. In order to achieve the above objectives in a country like Nigeria with very high rate of illiterate adults and out- of- school children will be very difficult without an education that can cater for the teeming population of illiterates. Mass literacy education as a strategy by the federal government in curbing high rate of illiteracy in the country can function effectively, if ICT tools are effectively utilized. Amma, (2010) stated that ICT has the capacity to store information, process information, display information where, when and desired by the user irrespective of age. Consequently, ICT has a great role to play in achieving the goals of mass literacy education in Nigeria because of its ubiquitous nature.

ICT CONCEPT AND TOOLS

Information and communication technologies (ICT) according to Tukur, Garba and Suleman, (2020) can be defined as electronic means of capturing, processing, storing and disseminating information. ICT can serve the user anywhere and anytime. However, ICT is an electronic means of sending and receiving information, storing and accessing information within the users' convenience. In the same vein, Akude and Ajuzie in Joseph and Onwuhanze (2020) observed that ICT stand for information and Communication Technology as the creation, processing, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information, ideas, knowledge and skill, using sound, motion pictures and diagrams.

Information and Technology Tools (ICT)

Various definitions of ICT depicts that the concept is very broad with divers tools. Joseph and Onwuhanze, (2020) stated that ICT tools include, radios, television, video DVD, telephone (both line and mobile phones), satellite systems, computer network hardware and software. They further included every other technologies, equipment

and services associated with these technologies as ICT tools or devices. Examples are video conferencing, e-mail and blogs. However, it is necessary to group ICT into platform for easy understanding.

Three different platforms through which ICT tools are applied according to Ugwu and Mbalisi (2019) are:

- 1 The print -these include, newspaper; magazines, posters, etc.
- 2 Electronics – examples of electronic medias are radio and television, webinar and
- 3 Social media – Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, You tube, twitter, e –mail.

The concept of Mass Literacy Education

Literacy in the early years was defined as the ability to read, write and compute figures. But in recent times, literacy could be defined as the ability to read, write, compute figures, read and interpret charts, graphs, and statistical tools, use technological tools to keep abreast with trends in the society at large. According to Ugwegbe in Iyang, (2019) literacy is traditionally understood as the ability to read, write and use arithmetic but the modern meaning of literacy has been expanded to include the ability to use language, numbers, images, computers and other basic means to understand, communicate and gain useful knowledge and dominant symbolic systems of culture.

Therefore, mass literacy education is the process of using adult education tools and principles in inculcating literacy skills in the teaching of illiterate populace. Adult education strategies are aimed to reduce illiteracy to the barest in the society. According to Policy Guidelines on Education (2017), over 65 million young persons and adults have missed out in the formal school system and therefore the need for educational strategy to make up for this gap.

forms of Literacy Education

There are the basic literacy education and the functional literacy education.

Basic literacy: This includes the inculcation of reading, writing and numeracy skills on an illiterate adult.

Functional literacy: This involves the inculcation of basic skills that will help the individuals function properly and efficiently in their various roles in the society. They include, communication skills, language skills, technological skills etc. (Aruma 2010).

Section one of the NMCC shows that Nigeria has an adult literacy rate of 62% in 2016, making an estimated number of 165 million people. Also, in 2013, UNICEF survey showed that Nigeria has over 11.3 million out- of -school children. Ihijirika (2017) highlighted the early development of mass literacy as having its roots from the post-colonial era with view of literacy education but later grow to include mass literacy after the Second World War. This was followed with, ‘Mass Education in Africa Society.’ Through this document, the Colonial Secretary’s Advisory Committee on Education decided to fight mass literacy by involving all sectors of the community (Onyeozu and Okorie 2018). In 1977, non- formal education was formally included in National Policy on Education.

Onyeozu and Okorie (2018) explained that Kano State Government established the Agency for Mass Literacy Education in 1980 in compliance with the Jometien Declaration of Education for All (EFA). All these are earlier efforts at actualizing mass literacy and eradicating illiteracy yet much success has not been achieved as Nigeria is rated among the highly illiterate countries in Africa.

Consequently, successive governments have made efforts at achieving education for all. These include:

- ii. Launching of mass literacy campaign in 1982 by Shehu Shagari, Green revolution.
- iii. Instituting National Directorate of food, roads and Rural Infrastructures (DFRRI) in 1986, National Directorate of Employment (NDE) etc. by General Ibrahim Babaginda's administration. Ezimah (2004).
- iv. Revamping of Open Distance learning (ODL) to accomplish compulsory education for all and sundry by Olusegun Obasango in (1999-2007).
- v. Enhancing of National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) and Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), National Commission for Nomadic Education (NCNE) and the pursuance of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). All these were carried out during Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's regime (2011-2015). Onyeozu and Okorie (2018).
- vi. Strengthening of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from 2015 till date.

However, it is pertinent to note that the scope of mass literacy is vast as it touches on all categories of persons and various learning needs, hence the need for a learning approach that is vast and all encompassing, which is ICT. Objectives of Mass literacy Education as enshrined in The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013) Section (4) of the National Policy on Education (NPE) are to:

1. Provide functional basic education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who left school too early. The target groups include migrate folks, almajiri pupils, illiterates; and adolescents; people who left the formal school early and are now ready and willing to come back and continue schooling; and other categories of disadvantaged groups; who are unable to have access to the conventional educational system and therefore, require other forms of educational programs to cater for their particular /peculiar needs and circumstances.
2. Provide remedial and life-long education for youths and adults who did not complete secondary education.

3. Provide in-serve, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills. Joseph and Onwuhanzu, (2020) pointed out the scope of mass illiteracy, adult and non-formal education to cover basic education, remedial education, civic education, vocational education, health and environmental education, consumption education etc.

Rationales for the Adoption of ICT in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education

The MDGs, in Mass literacy goals and SDGs cannot be achieved before 2030 without maximizing the potential of ICT. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an integral part of the contemporary society in every sphere. Therefore, the need for ICT to be adopted in promoting mass literacy, adult and non-formal education in Nigeria are as follows:

1. It supports life-long learning.
2. It is self-paced or learner paced.
3. ICT tools give way for cost effective learning.
4. It supports distance learning.
5. It is ubiquitous in nature.
6. Bridges the gap created by the traditional face-to-face learning system.
7. ICT makes it possible for easy research, as information is easily accessed stored, retrieved and shared among learners (adults).
8. It serves large numbers of adult learners within a short period of time.
9. ICT is fun and makes learning self-willed.
10. Most ICT tools are built easily to translate words in other languages, making it easy for people to share knowledge or information in other languages.

Tukur etal (2020) added that:

1. ICT embedded learning provides wider access to education.

2. It will ensure equality of opportunities in education.
3. Provides flexible but qualitative education.
4. Provides the entrenchment of global learning culture.

Maximizing Potentials of (ICT) Information and Communication Technology in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education in Nigeria.

Nations of the World have incorporated e-learning into their educational system through lesson plans, curricula and methodologies. Idogho and Kayode in Turkur et al, (2020) suggested the following platforms for maximizing ICT in achieving mass literacy, adult and non-formal education in Nigeria as follows:

Bloggng: This is a personal journal published on the World Wide Web.

Social media Networks: this is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of webs and allows for creation, exchange and use of content. Examples are Facebook, Whatsapp, Youtube, Instagram, Skype etc.

Skyping: These include, free videos, phone conferencing, etc.

Podcasting: this involves listening to audio recording of lectures or watch live lectures.

E-learning: this comprises all electronically supported learning. Examples of e-learning include, computer –based learning, web-based learning, internet, intranet/extranet, audio, video, streaming etc.

Flexible platforms: This involves the use of various learning environments such as

Blended learning – combinations of face - face and e-learning.

High breed learning – involves using both synchronous and asynchronous learning methods such as Whatsapp and Zoom etc.

However, ICT can help in the actualization of mass literacy in the following ways:

- a. Teaching of basic and post literacy using videos, recorded materials and tablets.

- b. Delivering of seminars and workshops for in-service or on-the-job training for work efficiency using video conferencing, zoom and Whatsapp to participants all over the world regardless of locations.
- c. Teaching of political education and civic awareness, environmental literacy, wealth sensitizations etc. through broadcasts, (radio and television), phones and internet, prints (posters, newspaper, magazines) etc. This can cover large number of participants within a short period of time.
- d. Inculcation of vocational/skill development through video recordings and whatsapp, Youtube, Instagram, etc.
- e. Language and communication development through voice notes and audio devices.
- f. Interactive radio programmes for migrants such as fisher folk, nomads, etc.

Challenges of ICT in Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal eEducation.

Despite the benefits of ICT in enhancing mass literacy in Nigeria, the use of it is still low.

Ishikaku and Ephraim, (2022) identified the following as challenges of ICT in Adult Education:

1. High cost of ICT facilities, maintenance and services.
2. Poor electric supply especially at the rural areas.
3. High level of illiteracy.
4. Lack of knowledge of the use of ICT facilities and lack of ICT skills especially, facilities and lack of ICT skills especially among older adults.

Conclusion

Information and communication technology (ICT) and mass literacy, adult and non-formal education is inseparable in contemporary times. ICT is requisite in achieving vision 2030, SDGs, MDGs, and Education for All in Nigerians. This is so because, ICT tools and devices makes it easy for the collection, production, storage, sharing

and usage of qualitative information, be it audio, video, print, graphics, and statistical materials to a large audience regardless of location. ICT is ubiquitous and also caters for learning needs of different categories of learners.

REFERENCES

- Amma, E.O. (2010), The role of information and communication technology (ICT) in enhancing the capabilities of adult learners in Nigeria. *Multi-Disciplinary Journal of Research Development* 15.1-6
- Ephraim, K.A. (2013). Using ICT to mitigate environmental pollution through mass education in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Journal of Educational Media and Technology* 17(2) 101-108.
- Ekpeyong, O.V., Tawo, N.C and Ojong A. (2021). Adult Education in Nigeria for eradication of mass literacy for social transformation and good governance. <https://www.research-gate.net/publication/356732440>.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), National policy on Education. NERDC press.
- Ihejirika, J.C. (2013). A preview of government efforts in promoting mass literacy in Nigeria: lessons from adult Education historical research. *Journal of Education and practice* (4). 132-136
- Ishikaku E.C.V and Ephraim, K.A, (2022). Utilization of Information and communication technology in Adult Education Awareness and participation in Port Harcourt Metropolis. *Journal of Development Studies Round Table*. 9 (1) 162-173.
- Joseph, A. and Onwuhanze, U. J. (2020). Information and Communication Technology in adult education as a tool for promoting democracy and good governance in Nigeria. *African Journal of Education and Development Studies*. (2). 188-202.
- Mbalisi, O.F. and Ugwu, A. (2019). Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in adult education for promoting right Democratic values in Nigeria. *International Journal of Education learning and Development*. 7(7) 84-96.
- National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-formal Education (NMEC) (2017)
- Onyeozu, A.M, and Okorie, C.U(2015). Torchlight on Adult Education: Port Hacourt: Press and Bookshop, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Patrick, M.J. (2020). Political economy of adult education: setting agenda for post – Covid-19 in time of austerity. *African Journal of Adult Education and Development Studies*. (2) 131-144.

Turkur, M, Bebeji U.G and Suleman M. M. (2020). The impact of ICT in Ault and Non-formal education in Nigeria: A review. *International Journal of Business, law and Education*. (1) 77-86